

A
DISTINCTION
BETWEEN

The Presence of GOD,

As our *Maker and Preserver*;

And His PRESENCE,

As our *Redeemer and Sanctifier*.

HE that will think aright, must acknowledge the PRESENCE of GOD in a twofold respect, viz. as the *Maker and Preserver* of us in our Being as Creatures, and as the *Redeemer and Sanctifier* of us as Christians, or new Creatures.

This Distinction is not only agreeable to Right Reason, but also to the Dictates of the Holy Ghost in the sacred Scriptures.

For as to the first, viz. the Presence of GOD with us, as the *Maker and Preserver* of us in our Being as Creatures; The eminently Inspired Apostle said, *In him we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 28. And the Man after God's own Heart said, *Whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend*

up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Hell, behold thou art there, Psal. 139. 7, 8. And the sorely-afflicted Job, when he desired Death, said to God, *How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone, till I swallow down my spittle?* Job 7. 19. Which shews he was very sensible, that the Presence of God supported and sustained his Natural or Bodily Life.

Nothing can be plainer, than that the Holy Scriptures plentifully set forth God, as the Preserver of Men, in their Being: And nothing less than his Power and Presence can effect so wonderful a Work. This Presence of his is properly call'd (and generally understood to be) his *Omnipresence*; his Presence, as he is with all his Creatures every-where, to preserve and strengthen them in their Existence or Being.

And as to the second, viz. the Presence of God with us, as the Redeemer and Sanctifier of us, as Christians, or new Creatures, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God as well as Man, said to his Disciples, *Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the World,* Mat. 28. 20. And *without me, ye can do nothing,* John 15. 5. The Royal Psalmist said, *The upright shall dwell in thy Presence,* Psal. 140. 13. Peter the Apostle said, *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of Refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord,* Acts 3. 19. And the Psalmist also said, *In thy Presence is fulness of Joy,* Psal. 16. 11.

These Sayings relate to the Religious or Peculiar Presence of God, which they (and they only) have a Sense of, in degree (at certain times, at least) who have put off, (or are putting off) through Faith and Grace, the old corrupt and fallen Nature of Man, and have put on (or are putting on) the new purified and restored Nature, the new Creature, and are in some degree Partakers of the Divine Nature.

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This Distinction being well consider'd, and rightly apply'd, will yield an easie Solution to the Objections against the *Solemn Affirmation*.

For if I understand the case aright, all the Dissatisfied agree, that the *Affirmation* may be taken as moved thereto by the *Divine Spirit*; and that a Friend, who so takes it, doth not swear; nor is it, as so taken, more than *Tea and Nay*; it doth not come of Evil, nor is prohibited by Christ: That is, that it is not an Oath, or more than *Tea and Nay*, when moved by the Spirit of God to take it, (or in a true Freedom from him, as it is express'd in a Manuscript hereafter mention'd.) But then, if that be not the case of the Taker, (according to the Manuscript) it is "more than *Tea and Nay*, cometh of Evil, and is "prohibited by Christ; because (tho' it be a true "Confession in it self to the Omnipresence of God, " &c. yet) it is a great Untruth in him that so "takes it.

So that this Objection centers in the Untruth of the Confession or Declaration: And indeed were it an Untruth in any Taker of it, it would be to him unlawful and prohibited; and were the Presence of God mention'd in the Affirmation, restricted to his Presence as *Redeemer and Sanctifier*, which is peculiar to Men, in (at least) a degree good, it would not be a true Confession in a Person altogether unsanctified, and void of the Sense of his *Religious and Peculiar* Presence, and so there would be some force and weight in the Objection.

But when the Presence of God mention'd in the Affirmation, is not restricted to his *Religious and Peculiar* Presence, as our *Redeemer and Sanctifier*, but may very well (and doubtless very truly) be taken to respect only his Presence with us, as our *Maker and Preserver*; and even our Natural Life, or Life as Men, gives us an infallible Sense and Certainty, that this his Presence is with us; and we being alive in the Body, are living Witnesses of it: Then

surely to confess to his Presence, in this Sense, is not only *true*, but a *great Truth*; and, according to this Objection, consequently, because true, is not more than *Yea* or *Nay*, and cometh not of Evil.

I have seen it in a Manuscript from a Dissatisfied Friend of *Cork*, that "he believes a Friend speaking in a living Sense of God's Omnipresence, as feeling at the same time God's Presence with him, or being moved to make such a Confession, is no more than *Yea* and *Nay*, is Truth, comes not of Evil, nor is forbidden by Christ.

And I say so too; and say, This justifies the taking of the Affirmation: For that a Friend, from the Natural Feeling and Understanding, which his Natural Sense and Reason gives and moves him to, (for these things are not bestow'd on Man for nothing) may be qualified as truly to speak in a living Sense of God's Omnipresence, and make Confession to the same, as Feeling at the same time God's Presence with him, as his Creator and Preserver, (which to be sure he will, as long as God keeps him a living Creature,) as a Friend, moved by the Divine Spirit, can be qualified to speak in a living Sense of God's *Religious* and *Peculiar* Presence: His *Peculiar* Presence to his *Peculiar* People, and make Confession to the same.

The same Friend owns, "the Lord may be appeal'd to, or his Name and Presence made mention of, to an Assembly, by way of Vouching the Truth, or to gain Belief of the Auditory, as moved thereto by the Divine Spirit. That is, he means, as I apprehend him, that in a Religious Meeting the Name and Presence of God may be mention'd, in a Religious Sense, as he is our *Redeemer* and *Sanctifier*, by way of Vouching the Truth, or to gain a Belief of the Auditory, under proper *Religious* Qualifications.

And I say, by the same Parity of Reason, in a Civil Assembly, or Court of Judicature, the Name and

and Presence of God may be mention'd in a *Civil* Sense, as he is our *Makor*, and the *Preserver* of us in our Being, by his *Omnipresence*, by way of Vouching the Truth, or to gain the Belief of the Court, under proper *Civil* Qualifications.

The Sum is, As no Man can truly call or acknowledge Jesus, *Lord*; that is, as being in Subjection to him, and make a true Confession to him as *Redeemer* and *Sanctifier*, by any thing less than the *Holy Ghost*; so no Man can truly call the Maker and Preserver of Men, *Almighty God*, and make a Confession to him as such, with any thing less than his *Reason* and *Understanding*.

In Religion, there must be a coming under the Operation of the Holy Spirit, as well as the Use of our Understanding; that we may Preach, as well as Pray with the *Spirit*, and with the *Understanding* also. But in Civil Matters, the Use of our Reason and Understanding alone is sufficient to acknowledge God, as our great Creator and Preserver: And altho' as our Redeemer, he may sometimes super-add the Motions and Dictates of his Spirit in *these* things, yet we are not therefore to abandon Civil Affairs 'till we have such Motions: A due Deference to Him, according to the best of our Understandings, is a sufficient Warrant for those kind of Actions.

Nor is it any more a *taking of the Name of God in vain*, as our Creator and Preserver, to use it in Truth and Righteousness, to gain Credit or a Belief to our Speech in *Civil Matters*, in a Court of Justice, under *Civil* Qualifications, *viz.* in the true use of our Reason and Understanding, than it is a *taking his Name in vain*, as our Redeemer and Sanctifier, to use it to gain Credit or Belief to our Speech in *Religious Matters*, under *Religious* Qualifications; it being used, (when used truly) in both Cases to good Purposes.

I am for *Truth-speaking*, and readily agree with
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the same Friend, that our Lord instituted *Truth-speaking* instead of *Swearing*: And I confess, I cannot see but we may, upon a general bottom, as a People, more truly and safely take the present Affirmation, upon the foot of *Truth-speaking*, by the common Assistance of God, than the Affirmation the Dissatisfied Friends have agreed to solicit for; tho' he says "the common Assistance of God is sufficient to qualify every Man to take it."

For as it is necessary, in order to confess to the Presence of God in a *Religious* Meeting, that we have a *Religious* Sense of his Presence, as the *Author* and *Worker* of our *Salvation*, and a Change and Renovation of Mind, so as to make us alive from the Death of Sin; so 'tis only necessary, that we have a Sense of his Presence, as the *Creator* and *Upholder* of us in our Beings, in order to confess to his Presence, as he is every where with his Creatures.

And as all, who are *Spiritually alive* from the Death of Sin, and under the Enjoyment of the *Spiritual* Flowings of Life, can truly confess to his Presence as their *Saviour*; so all who are *alive in the Body*, and under the Enjoyment of the *Natural* Flowings of Life, can as truly confess to his Presence, as their *Creator* and *Preserver*: For in Him all Men, even as to their Natural Life, live and move, and have their Being; so that every Man, who is *alive in the Body*, is a true Witness of the *Omnipresence* of God, (for he is enliven'd every moment by that Presence) and therefore may very truly say, he *declares in the Presence of Almighty God, the Witness of the Truth of what he says*; which therefore, to use his own words, "is not more than *Yea* or *Nay*, is *Truth*, comes not of *Evil*, nor is forbidden by *Christ*."

But to take their Affirmation, *viz. I A. B. do Sincerely and Solemnly declare and affirm*, requires a greater Qualification; for he that takes it, must not only be sensible, and witness that he is preserved in his Being by the *Omnipresence* of God, who is every
where,

where, but must also witness a State of Sincerity, and a State of Solemnity, which every Man do's not witness; and so consequently is not qualified to take the Affirmation they would have.

This Friend would have such an Affirmation as *Drunkards, Swearers, debauched and wicked Persons can take*, as he words it, or else it is prohibited by Christ; because otherwise it would not be true in them, and therefore more than *Yea or Nay, or Truth-speaking*, and so is Evil. I think on his Hypothesis, the Affirmation they have agreed to, ought to be scrupled, and the present Affirmation to be preferr'd before it; since I have made it plainly appear, as I think, that the same is suited, to use his Phrase, "*unto all (at least) Christians*---and that theirs is not.

"I grant (*says this Friend*) 'tis plain Truth-speaking, which Men are to keep to, instead of Swearing; and "I say (*says he*) this Truth-speaking doth "as well extend to Form, or additional Words, "which are used in Relation to the Taker (besides "the two *i. e. Yea and Nay*) as it doth to the Truth "of the Matter of Fact, which is to be spoken, and "if such Forms, or additional Words, will not "hold good and true to all Takers, without exception, as the *Yea and Nay* of Christ will do, I "think then it Consequently follows, that such "Forms or Additions are more, and of a higher "Strain and Nature, and therefore forbidden by "Christ. Upon which he adds, *That a wicked Man may give his Evidence by their Form, but he is prohibited ours, because he cannot repeat the Affirmation in a true Sense; and therefore the Affirmation is more, of a higher Strain and Nature than Yea and Nay, viz. plain Affirming and Denying.*

I observe, that he understands, more, of a higher Strain and Nature than *Yea and Nay, or plain Affirming or Denying*, to lie in the Untruth of the Form of Words in some Takers; and he argues, that therefore the Form is prohibited. But I think, by the fore-

foregoing, 'tis very manifest, that the Affirmation may be used by all, without the least *Untruth-Speak- ing*; for *all Men*, that have the use of their Reason and Senses, are *daily living and experimental Wit- nesses of the Omnipresence of God*, which is his Pre- sence as the *Maker and Preserver of Men*, Contradi- stinguished from his *Religious and Peculiar Presence with his Religious and Peculiar People*; and therefore may truly, upon the strictest Scrutiny, say, *they de- clare in the Presence of Almighty God, the Witness of the Truth of what they say*. But if more, of a higher strain or nature than *Tea and Nay*, lies in the *upruth of the Form of Words in some Takers*: That is, that some Men are not in a Condition to take it, as his Arguments are; and if there be *insincere Men*, and Men not *solemn*, these Men cannot truly say, they *sincerely and solemnly declare*: And then, by his own Arguments, their Form, which requires a Man to say, he *sincerely and solemnly declares*, is more, of a higher Strain and Nature than *Tea and Nay*: And so consequently comes of Evil, and is prohibited by Christ.

The Manuscript, out of which the foregoing Ci- tations were taken, contains about five Sheets of Paper, very closely written, the Author is a very Leading-Man among the Dissatisfied. Since which is come forth in print, a Book consisting of Ninety- five Pages in Octavo, Entituled, *An Essay on the Fifth of Matthew, from Ver. 33. to 37. With some Observations upon the present Affirmation*. The Preface whereof appears to be wrote on purpose to prevent any body's mistake in thinking it to be an Answer to the *Letter from a Satisfied to a Dissatisfied Friend*. I shall therefore take notice of the Collective Sense and Arguments of this *Essay*, and compare the same with the Collective Sense of the Author of the said Manuscript.

“Some (says he, page 20. and I suppose by that *some* he intends some of the Dissatisfied Friends, such

as the Author of the said Manuscript, who is a much greater Man than himself) "are willing to
 "suppose, that by that Form of Words (*whatsoever*
 "*is more than these, cometh of Evil*) is meant what is
 "more than Truth in the Affirming or Denying; and
 "so confine, *cometh of Evil*, to the Truth or False-
 "hood of the Speech, not to the Mode or Manner of
 "Speech: But (says he, pag. 21.) "If *cometh of Evil*
 "must relate to the Truth or Falshood of the Af-
 "firming, &c. it would have been an odd Doctrine
 "to have inculcated in that place.

Now contrary to this, the Author of the Manuscript says, as before cited, that our Lord *did institute Truth-speaking instead of Swearing.*

But if the Apostle James understood the Case, and had the Mind of Christ therein, I think he has fairly given it against the *Essay*, in favour of the *Manuscript*: For, instead of the Words of Christ, *whatsoever is more than these, cometh of Evil*; he says, on the same Subject of not Swearing, *But let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay Nay, lest you fall into Condemnation*, Jam. 5. 12. This respects Truth-speaking, and not the Mode or Manner of Speech; and shews plainly, that he understood the Mind and Institution of Christ in this case to be, to *speak the Truth in lieu of swearing Truth.*

The Author of the *Essay* lays it down as a Duty, "that in giving Evidence, we do it in no more
 "Words than is necessary to the Matter, &c. and
 "especially that we use neither Form nor Ceremony
 "wholly extrinseck to the Matter, as a Medium,
 "either to oblige me to speak the Truth, or others
 "to believe it, pag. 35. That "the using of the
 "outward Medium (*viz.* an Oath) is not only un-
 "lawful, but the substituting of another (supposing
 "it were wholly another) Medium in its stead (that
 "is to be used for the same Ends and Purposes, *viz.*
 "to add a Sanction, or gain Credit to the Evidence
 "or Attestation, pag. 73.) is likewise Condemnable

pag. 72. And that " he believes it is the Judgment
" of Thousands of Religious Persons in this Nation,
page 73.

The Author of the Manuscript, on the contrary, justifies the saying, *Verily, verily*, (which is a Medium or Form wholly extrinſick to the Matter) " ſuch
" a thing is true, or verily, verily, ſuch a thing is
" falſe: Or the uſing the Form the Diſſatisfied have
agreed to (*viz.*) *I A. B. do Sincerely and Solemnly de-*
clare and affirm (which is a Medium or Form wholly
extrinſick to the Matter.) So that they are directly
opposite in their Opinions in this point. And when
J. Skidmore, with his believed Thousands, ſhall meet
J. Pike, with his ſuppoſed greater Number, let them
ſettle theſe Points, if they can.

So much for whatſoever is more than theſe, *viz.*
Yea and Nay. Now as to an *Oath*.

The Author of the *Essay* lays down this general
Rule, pag. 12. " That there is ſomething more or
" leſs (expreſs'd or imply'd) that is neither Eſſential
" nor Relative to the Matters, the Oaths are made
" to, but altogether extrinſick thereunto, uſed
" purely to add a Sanction or Credit to the Atteſta-
" tion; and that, I conceive, (whether it be more
" or leſs, whether explicit or implicit, by Ceremo-
" ny or without, is what moſt juſtly intitles ſuch
" Forms of Speech to be accounted Oaths, pag. 12.
We have, ſays he " laid it down for a general Rule,
" that in all Forms of Speech there muſt be ſome-
" thing more or leſs (expreſs'd or imply'd) that is
" neither Eſſential, nor hath any neceſſary Relation
" to the Matter, but altogether extrinſick thereun-
" to, uſed purely to add a Sanction or Credit to the
" Evidence or Atteſtation, to intitle ſuch Forms of
" Speech to be Oaths, pag. 46. But he ſays, " the A-
" poſtle's atteſting the Name of God (*LET IT HAVE*
BEEN DONE IN WHAT FORM SOEVER) cannot be
" deem'd an Oath, ſince it was Eſſential, or at leaſt
" had a neceſſary Relation to the Matter to which it
" was

it was us'd, *ibid.* So that, according to him, 'tis impossible for a Man in the Immediate Openings of the Word of Life (as he Phrases it, *ibid.*) to Swear. I believe he is the first Man that ever ventur'd to publish in print this so absurd and monstrous a Notion; and to put it in black too, that his Reader might be sure not to miss giving it its due Weight.

That the Apostle did not Swear, in the Form of Speech he used, I grant; but that if he had attested the Name of God (*let it have been done in what form soever*) as for Example: If he had said, *God do so to me, and more also; or, let me be accursed, and all the Plagues and Judgments of Heaven and Earth come upon me, if what I preach or write to you is not Truth;* that this would not have been an Oath in him is one of the strangest and wildest Notions that ever was vented among Rational Creatures: And to believe it, requires not less Faith, than that of Transubstantiation; for the Understanding must be as much debased and abused.

I observe the Reason he gives, why the Apostle's *Attesting the Name of God cannot be deem'd an Oath*, is, because it was *Essential*, or at least had a necessary Relation to the Matter to which it was used.

And I think it must be as readily confessed, that the *Attesting or Witnessing the Name or Presence of God* (or Declaring in his Presence, the Witness of the Truth of what we say) as our *Creator and Preserver* in a Civil Matter, is as *Essential*, or at least necessarily related thereunto, as that the *Attesting or Witnessing the Name or Presence of God*, as our *Redeemer or Sanctifier*, in *Preaching*, or a *Religious Matter*, is *Essential*, or at least necessarily related thereunto: Since the Presence of God, as our *Maker and Preserver*, is as *Essential*, or as necessarily related unto Civil Matters (or our Being as Rational Creatures, as is before proved,) as his Presence, as our *Redeemer and Sanctifier*, is *Essential*, or necessarily

fully related unto, *Religious* Matters, or the New-Creature-state.

And thus, I think, the Basis and Foundation of the *Manuscript* and *Essay* are both razed; and the two Pillars of these two Parties, who oppose the Affirmation, (*viz.* the Followers of *J. Pike*, and the Followers of *J. Skidmore*) are easily removed, and their Buildings cannot stand.

For as they are opposite one to the other, so they are also both of them, as 'tis very plain, contrary to Scripture, our Antient Friends Testimony, and Right Reason.

London, Printed and Sold by Philip Gwillim in Austin-Fryars, near the Royal Exchange, 1713.